

Swiss Re L&H Market Event 2026 - Forward, Together: Navigating Hong Kong's Next Chapter

# Early-Onset Cancer – The New Protection Imperative



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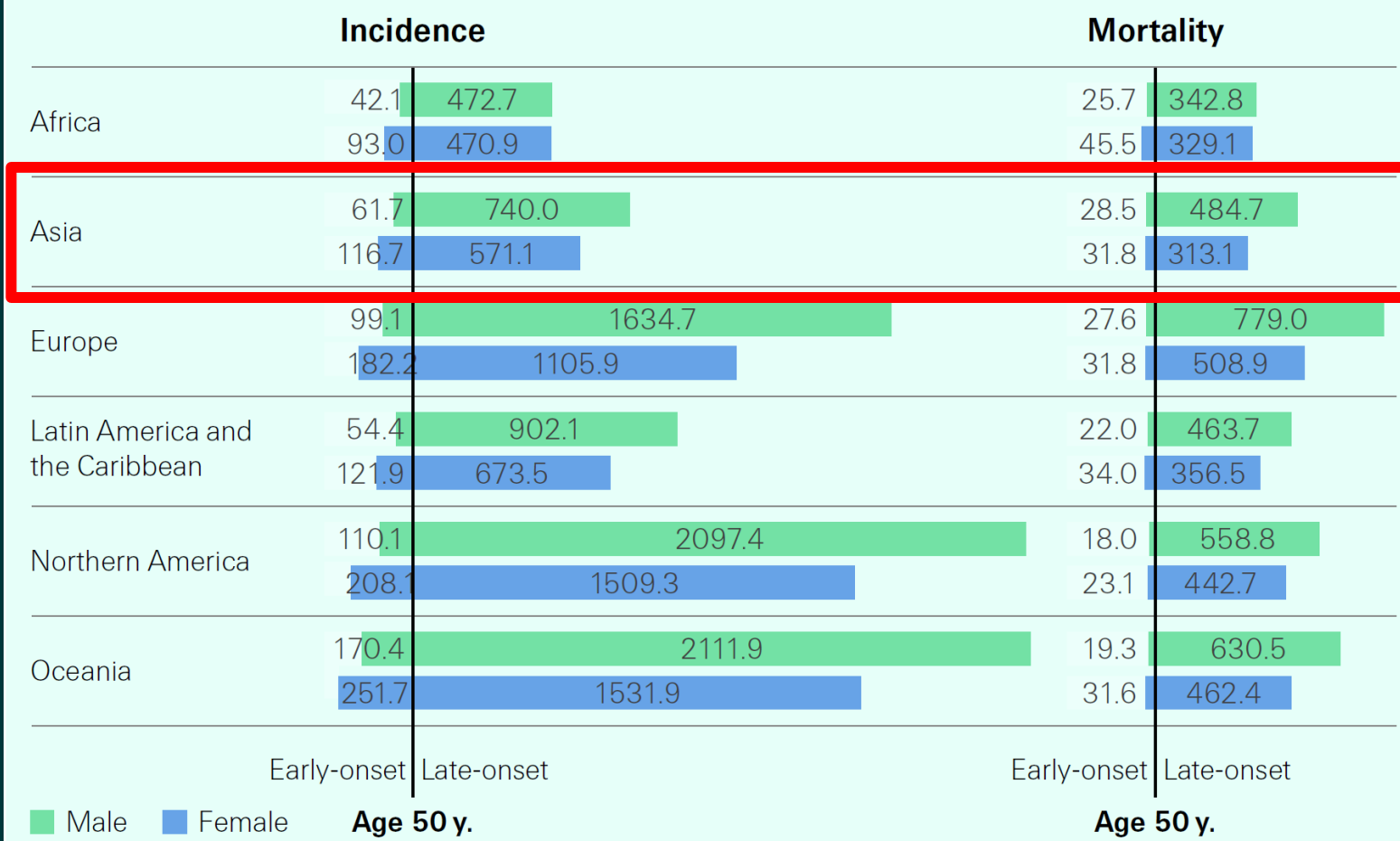
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# Early-Onset Cancer (EOC)

Early-onset cancer (EOC) typically refers to cancer diagnosed **after adolescence and before the age of 50 years.**

# Emerging trends

**Figure 4:** Crude incidence and crude mortality rate (per 100 000) by world region (2022)



Source: Global Cancer Observatory: Cancer Today (version 1.1). International Agency for Research on Cancer. Available from: [Cancer Today](#), accessed January 2026

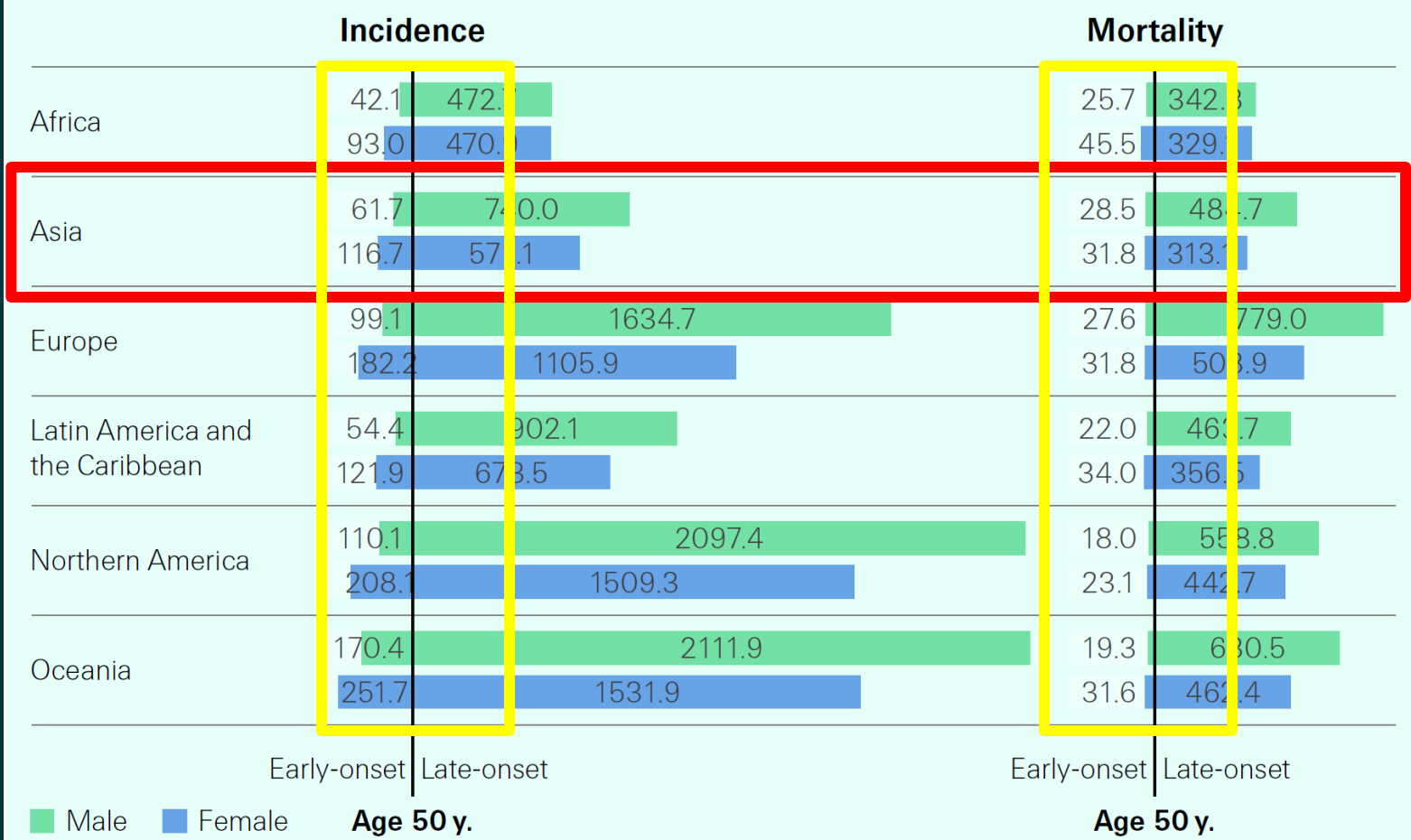
**In Asia:**

**7.7% (male) and 17.0% (female) of cancer cases are early-onset**

**5.6% (male) and 9.2% (female) of cancer deaths occur before age 50**

Swiss Re L&H Trend Spotlight: Cancer Epidemiology: evolving mortality and morbidity trends. 2026

**Figure 4:** Crude incidence and crude mortality rate (per 100 000) by world region (2022)



Compared with the general population, early-onset cancers account for a larger share of observed cancer cases within insured portfolios.

Source: Global Cancer Observatory: Cancer Today (version 1.1). International Agency for Research on Cancer. Available from: [Cancer Today](#), accessed January 2026

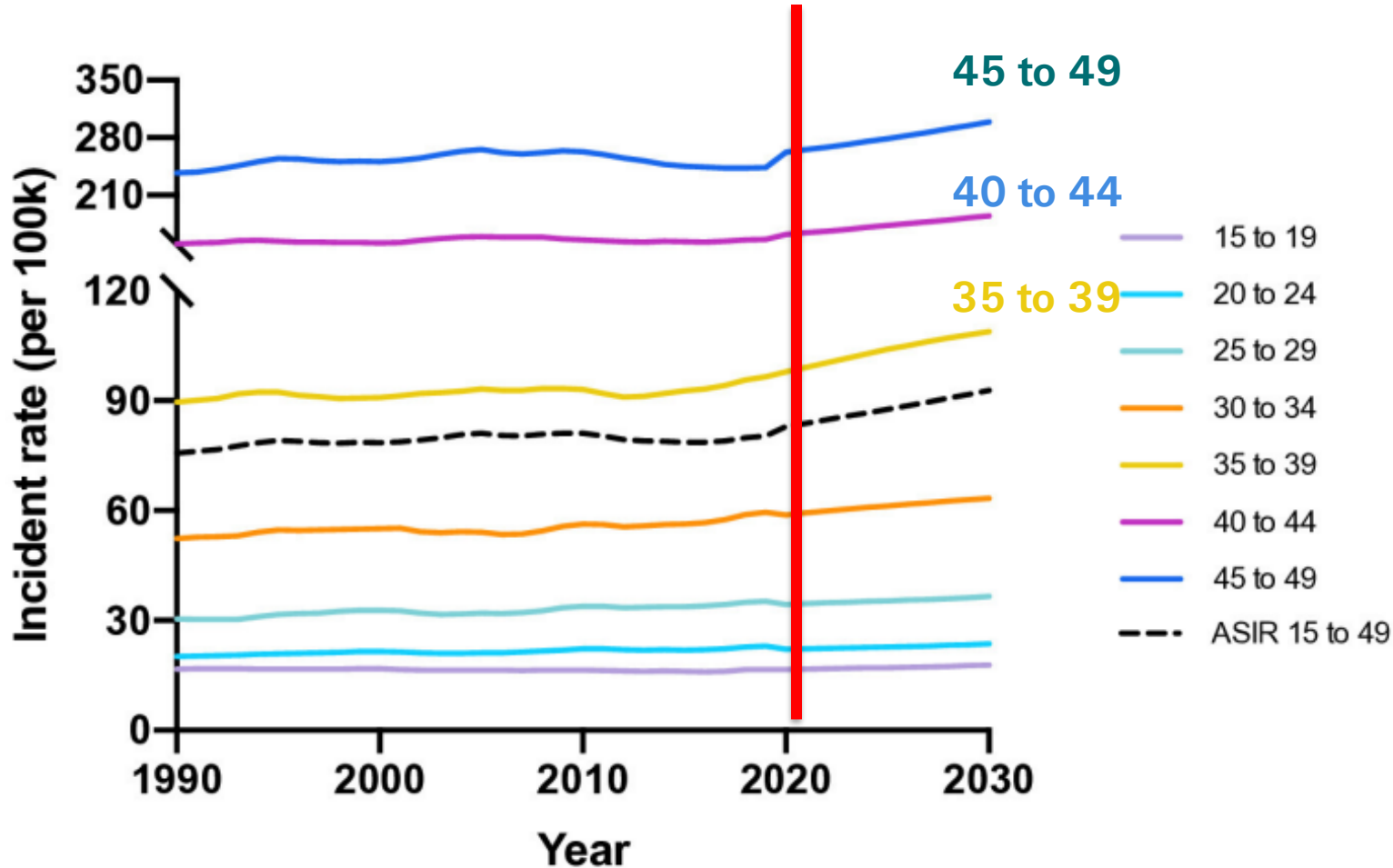
Swiss Re L&H Trend Spotlight: Cancer Epidemiology: evolving mortality and morbidity trends. 2026

One of the most significant epidemiological shifts in contemporary oncology

Global incidence of early-onset cancer **increased by 79.1%** between 1990 and 2019.

F André et al. The rising tides of cancers among young adults. Editorial. ESMO Open. 2025 Sep 3;10(9):105553.

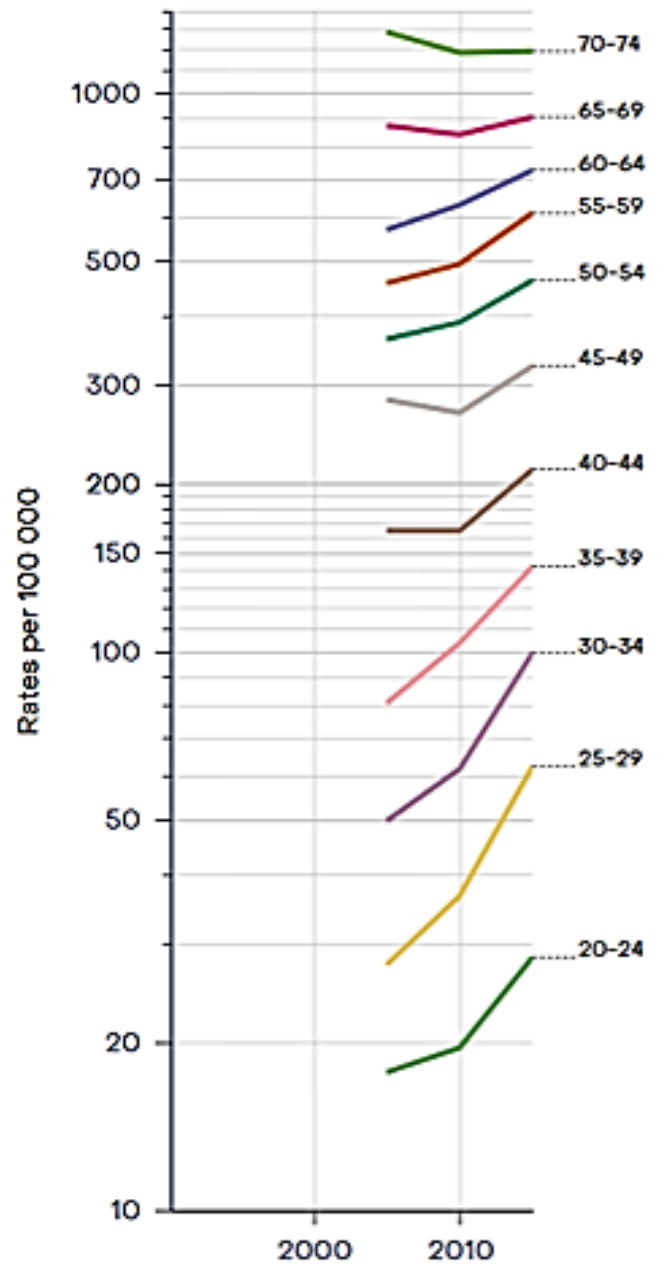
# Global



Projections indicate a **31%** increase in incidence from 2020 to 2030

# China

Cancer incidence is rising more rapidly among younger age groups



[https://gco.iarc.fr/overtime/en/dataviz/cohorts?populations=156&sexes=0&cohort=period&cohort\\_type=time&cancers=0&age\\_start=4](https://gco.iarc.fr/overtime/en/dataviz/cohorts?populations=156&sexes=0&cohort=period&cohort_type=time&cancers=0&age_start=4)

# Hong Kong

## males

All male cancers (except non-melanoma skin)			Colorectum			Lung			Thyroid		
Age group	Cases in 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases in 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases in 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)
25-49	1,188	+0.2	25-49	164	<b>+1.5*</b>	25-49	121	+0.2	25-49	91	<b>+5.1*</b>
50-74	11,510	<b>-0.5*</b>	50-74	2,052	<b>-1.6*</b>	50-74	2,283	<b>-1.0*</b>	50-74	161	<b>+3.1*</b>

## females

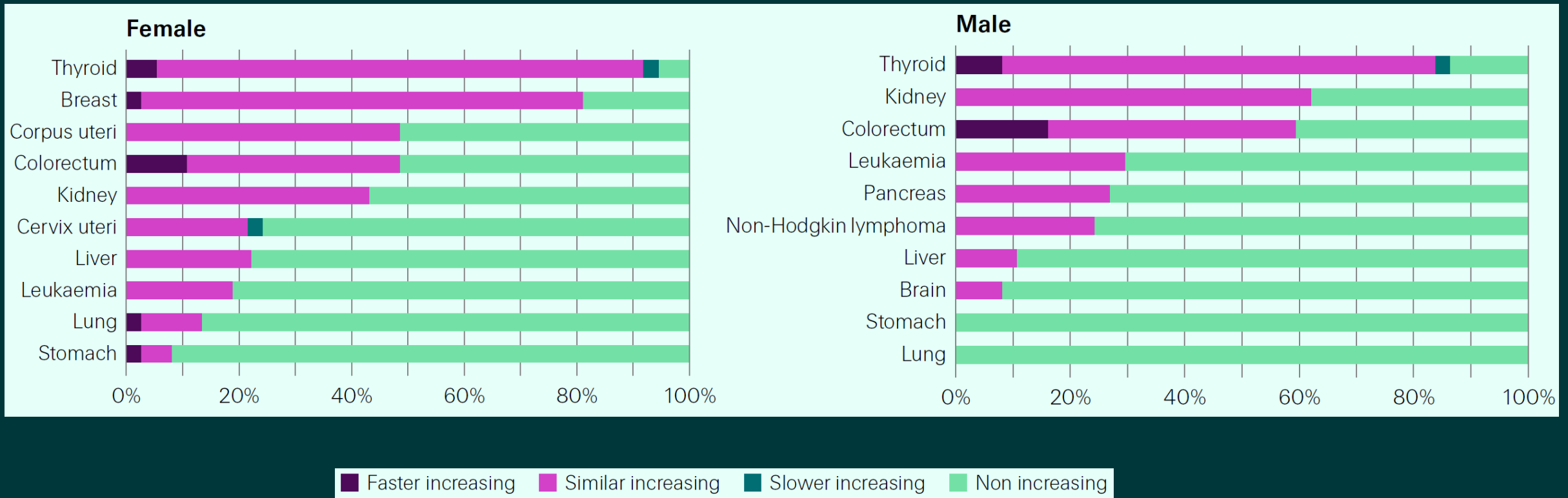
All female cancers (except non-melanoma skin)			Breast			Thyroid			Corpus uteri		
Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases in 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases in 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)
25-49	3,237	<b>+1.3*</b>	25-49	1,308	<b>+1.6*</b>	25-49	407	<b>+3.8*</b>	25-49	274	<b>+3.3*</b>
50-74	11,207	<b>+1.5*</b>	50-74	3,496	<b>+3.3*</b>	50-74	518	<b>+3.5*</b>	50-74	929	+1.6

Cervix			Colorectum			Lung		
Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)	Age group	Cases In 2023	AAPC (2014-2023)
25-49	193	-0.4	25-49	171	<b>+0.6*</b>	25-49	143	<b>+1.0*</b>
50-74	303	+0.7	50-74	1,332	<b>-0.6*</b>	50-74	1,643	<b>+1.8*</b>

## Overview of Hong Kong Cancer Statistics of 2023

# Proportion of early-onset incidence by cancer type (2022)




Swiss Re L&H Trend Spotlight: Cancer Epidemiology: evolving mortality and morbidity trends. 2026

# Where are these early onset cancers covered under the new HKFI standardized CI definition?

## Standardization of Critical Illness Definitions 危疾定義標準化

<b>Major Cancer 重大癌症</b>	<b>Early Stage Cancer 早期癌症</b>	<b>Carcinoma-in-situ 原位癌 (CIS)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thyroid cancer: stage 2 and above</li> <li>• Prostate cancer: above T1N0M0</li> <li>• Breast cancer: all stages</li> <li>• Lung cancer: all stages</li> <li>• Colorectal cancer: all stages</li> <li>• Kidney cancers: all stages</li> <li>• Leukaemia except chronic lymphocytic leukaemia less than RA1 stage III</li> <li>• ....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1 thyroid cancer</li> <li>• T1N0M0 prostate cancer</li> <li>• Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia having progressed to RA1 stage I or II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cervical: CIN III, CIS</li> <li>• Prostate: PIN III</li> </ul>



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 David Lu | 04 Mar 2026





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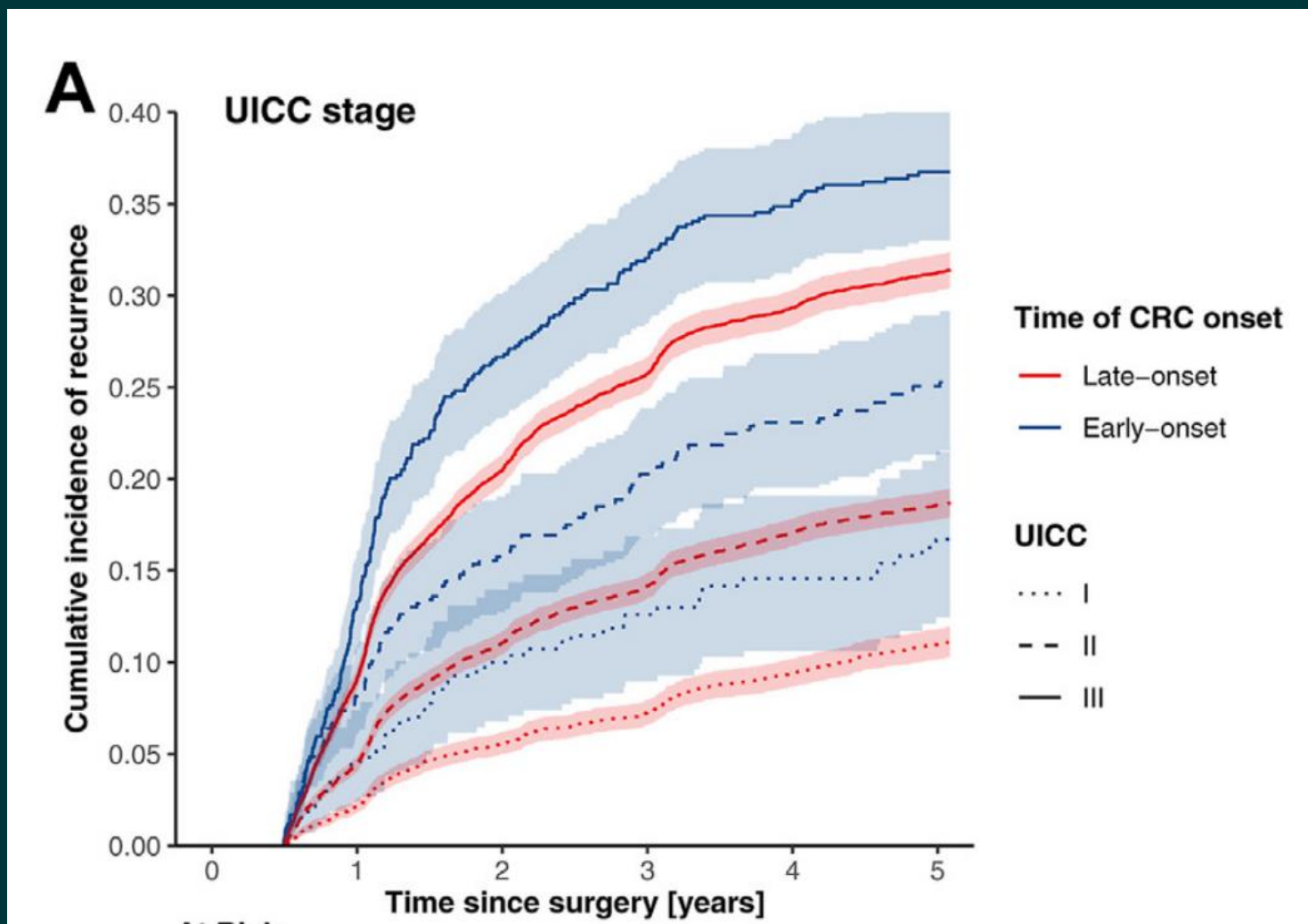
Traditional carcinogens remain important, **metabolic, lifestyle and environmental factors** increasingly shape cancer epidemiology

Around **38% of cancer cases are linked to 30 modifiable risk factors**

**Without intervention, Asia could face a generation entering adulthood with poorer baseline health than previous generations.**

# Clinical outcomes

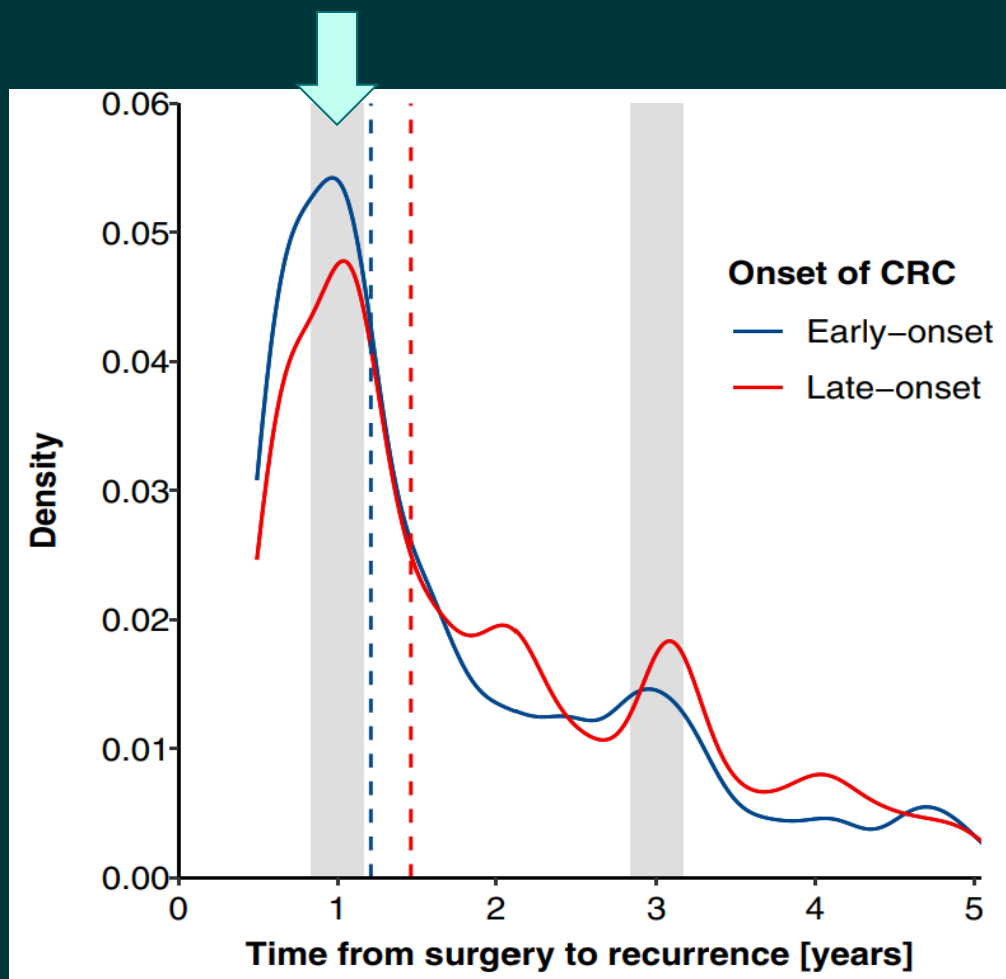
The 5-year cumulative incidence of **recurrence is higher in early-onset colorectal cancer than in late-onset colorectal cancer within the same stage**



Indicating that **delayed diagnosis is not the sole explanation for the higher risk of recurrence.**

Risk of recurrence in early-onset versus late-onset non-metastatic colorectal cancer, 2004-2019: a nationwide cohort study. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, 2024;47

Higher curve = more recurrences clustering at that time.

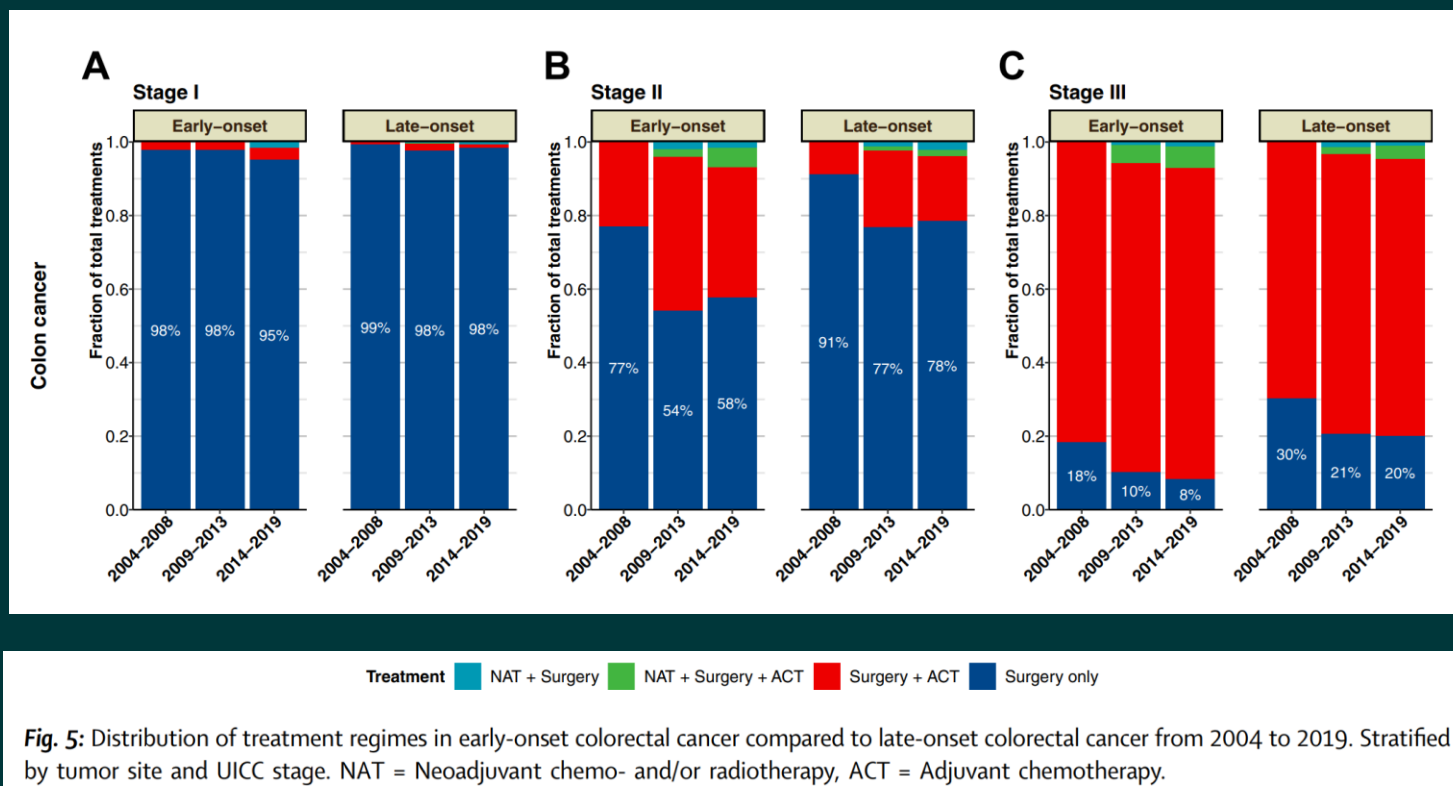


**Early-onset colorectal cancer recurs sooner, with a shorter median time to recurrence (14.5 months), than late-onset colorectal cancer (17.5 months)**

**Suggests a different recurrence dynamic.**

Risk of recurrence in early-onset versus late-onset non-metastatic colorectal cancer, 2004-2019: a nationwide cohort study. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, 2024;47

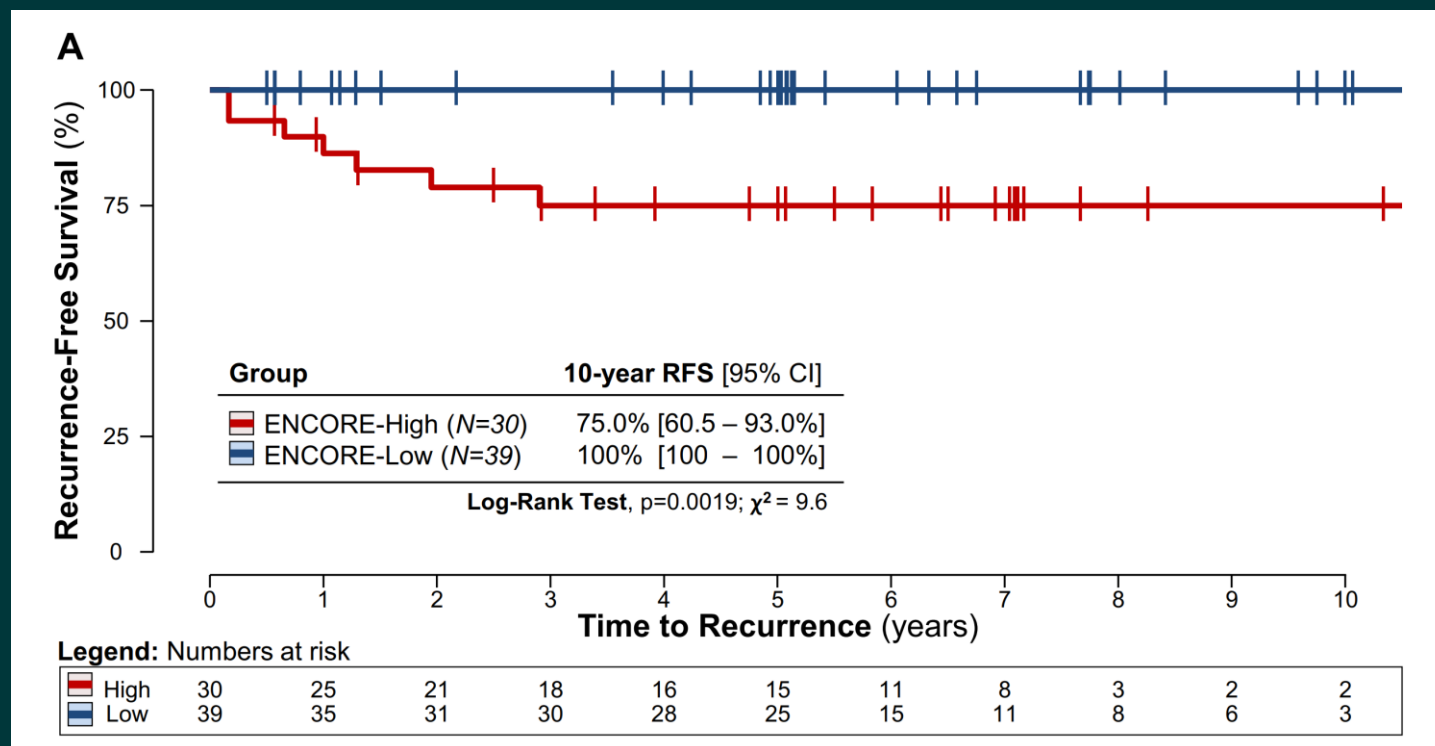
## In fact, early-onset patients received more intensive treatments compared to late-onset patients



“The excess risk was diminished in recent years, potentially due to more extensive treatment of younger and healthier early-onset patients that is, to date, **not yet recommended by guidelines.**”

Risk of recurrence in early-onset versus late-onset non-metastatic colorectal cancer, 2004-2019: a nationwide cohort study. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, 2024;47

## The ENCORE assay is a tissue-based, tumor-derived molecular assay incorporating **miRNA biomarkers** to predict recurrence in early-onset CRC

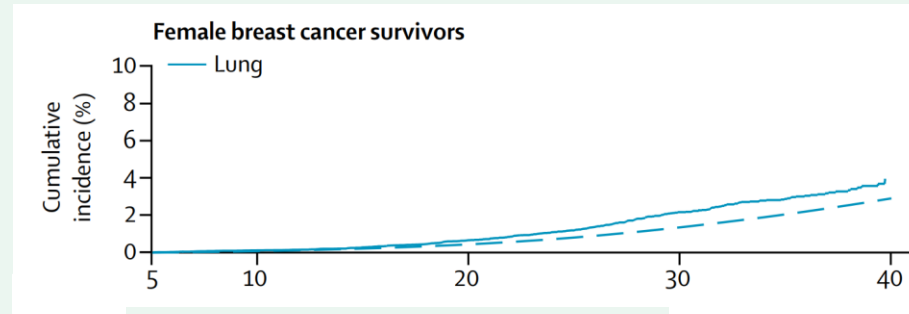


These findings suggest that **recurrence risk** in early-onset colorectal cancer is associated with **patient-specific tumour molecular features.**

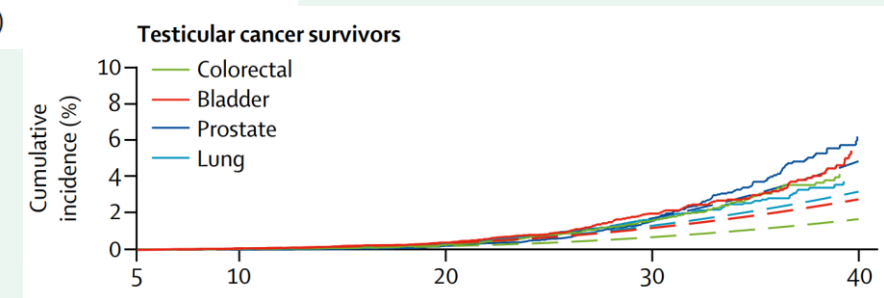
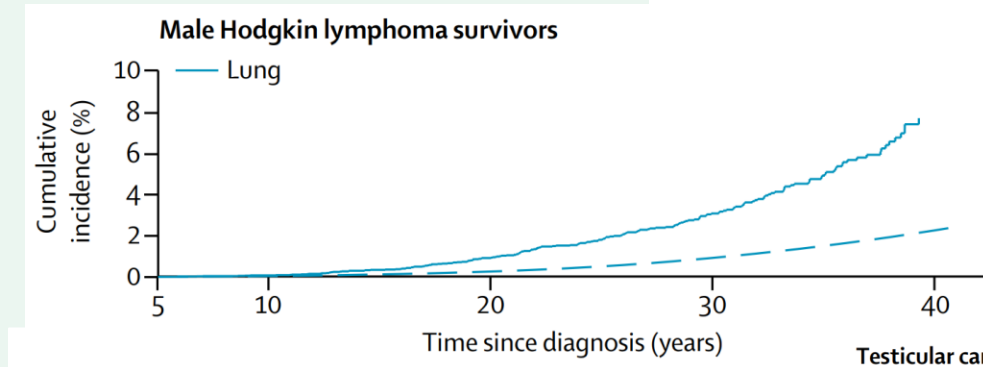
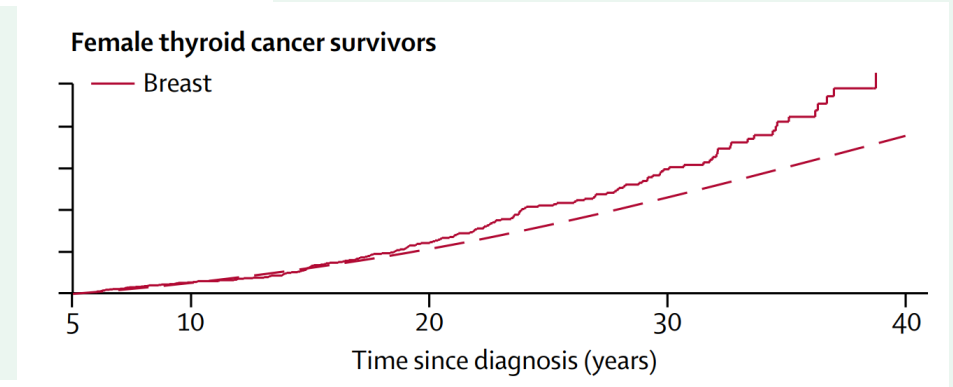
A Mannucci, et al. Prediction of long-term recurrence-free and overall survival in early-onset colorectal cancer: the ENCORE multi-centre study. *npj Precision Oncology*. (2025) 9:202

# Second primary malignancy risk (40 years follow up) in cancer survivors diagnosed at ages 15–39

Risk of subsequent primary neoplasms in survivors of adolescent and young adult cancer (Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Survivor Study): a population-based, cohort study. *The Lancet Oncology*, 2019; 20, 531-545.

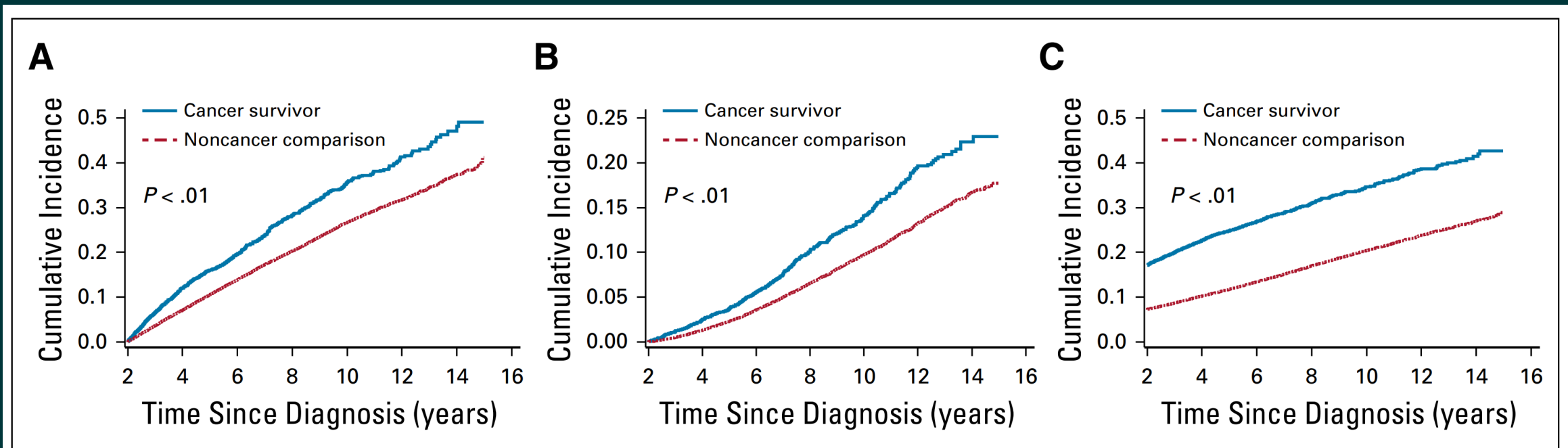


**Observed** (solid line)  
**Expected** (dashed)



Survivors of AYA cancer had a **2- to 3-fold increased risk** for cardiomyopathy, stroke, premature ovarian failure, chronic liver disease, and renal failure.

**40% of survivors of AYA cancer had multiple ( $\geq 2$ ) comorbidities** at 10 years after index date, compared with 20% of those without cancer.



**FIG 1.** Incidence of (A) any comorbidity, (B)  $\geq 2$  new comorbidities, and (C)  $\geq 2$  comorbidities by cancer survivor status.

Chronic comorbidities among survivors of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer. *J Clin Oncol* 38:3161-3174.

## Early-Onset Cancer: Key takeaway and future outlook

### Younger Age <50

79% growth in 10 years

### Surviving Longer Than Before

Higher lifetime risk

### Higher Chance for New Malignancies

Recurrent & 2<sup>nd</sup> primary

### Limited Historical Data

Current guideline based on  
normal onset

Early-onset cancer  
signals emerging  
considerations for  
long-term insurance  
risk

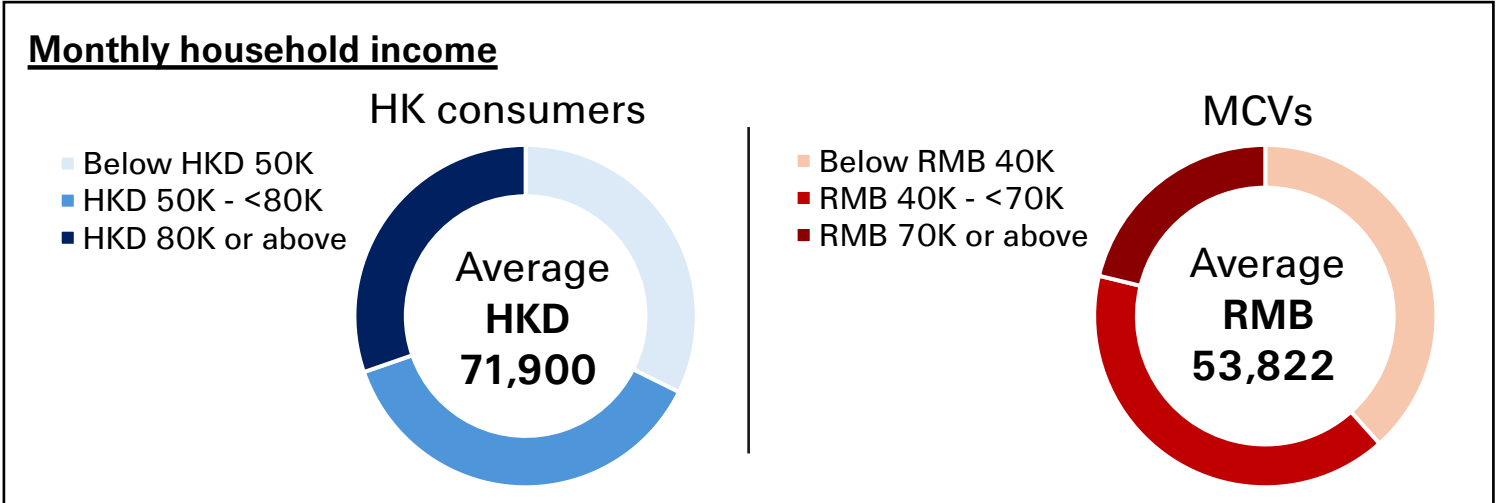
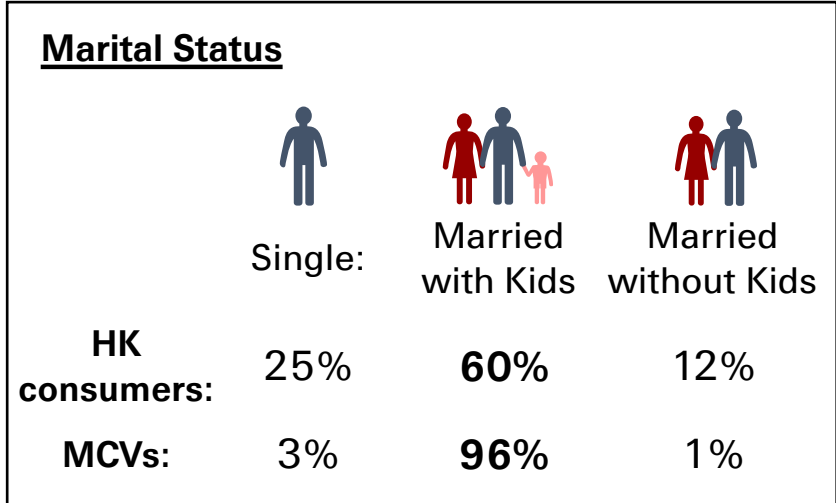
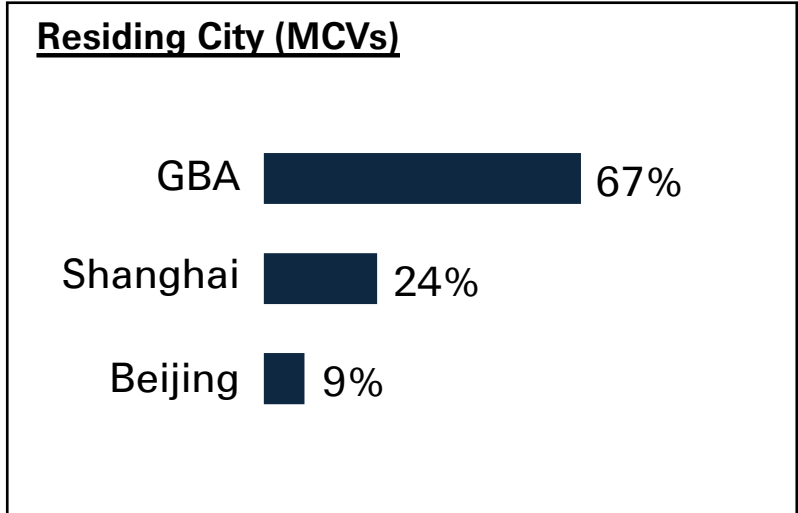
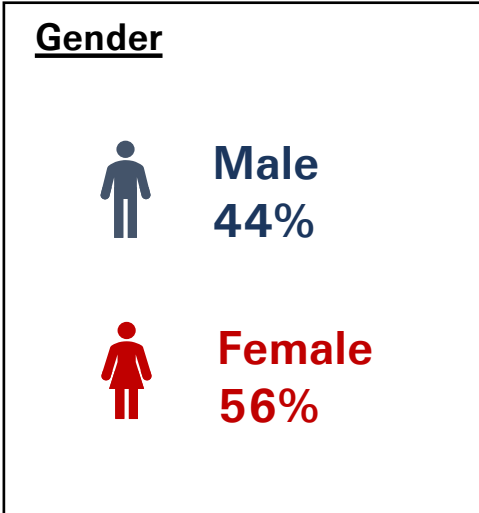
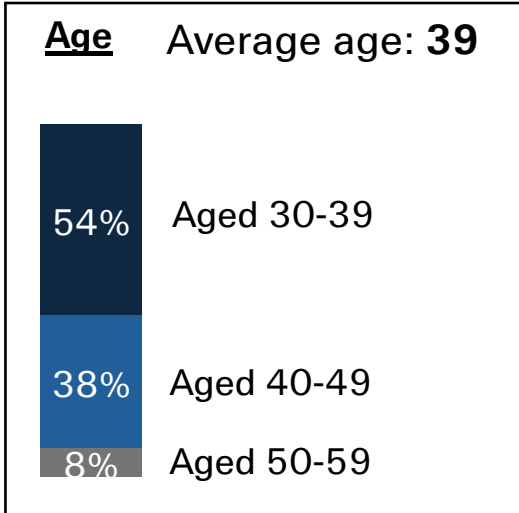
Alongside the ongoing  
evolution of clinical  
cancer treatment  
approaches

# Swiss Re Consumer Survey

To understand consumer needs and preference in health insurance, especially for cancer protection

**Survey Period**  
2025 OCT

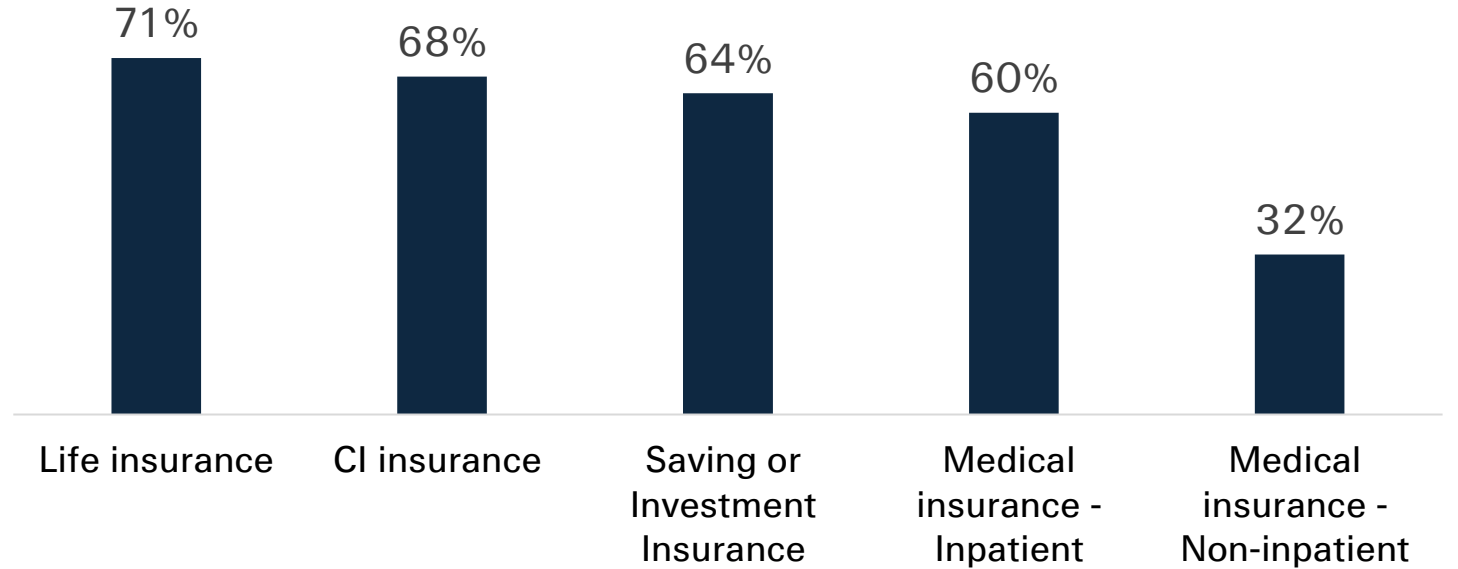
**Sample size**  
Total: 456  
HK consumers: 352  
MCVs: 104



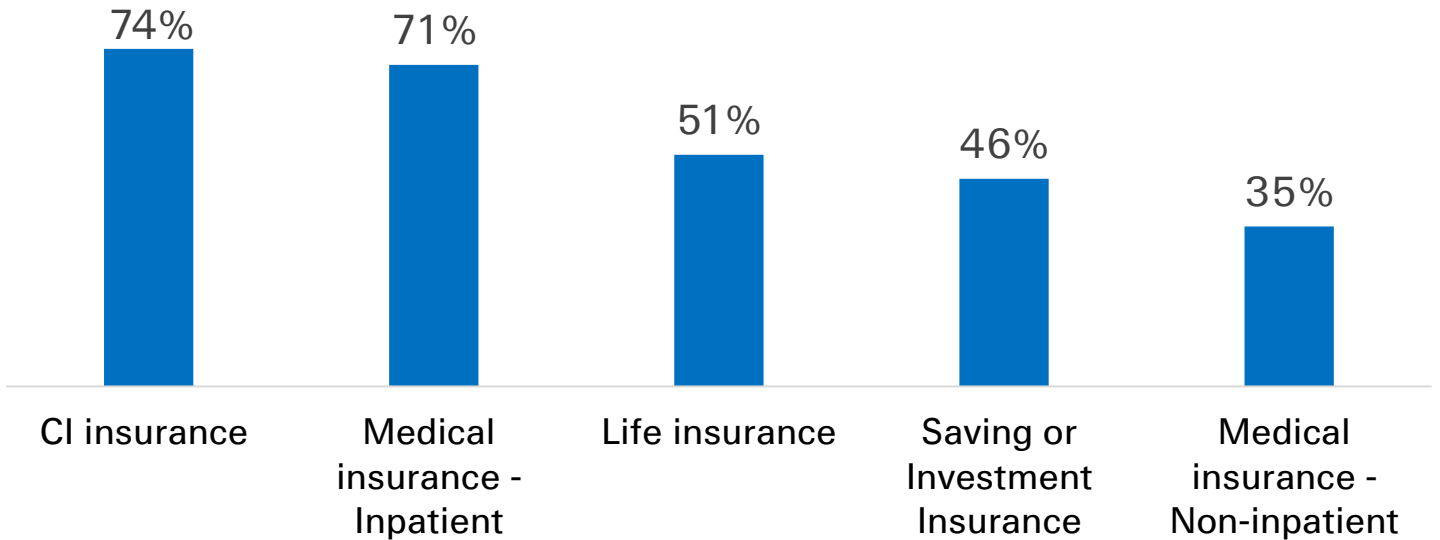
Strong existing ownership and continued high intent for CI and medical inpatient insurance - consumers hold 1.5 CI policies on average.

Most CI policies were purchased within 3 years, with a notable share held for >10 years, higher than 5-10 year.

### Products currently own

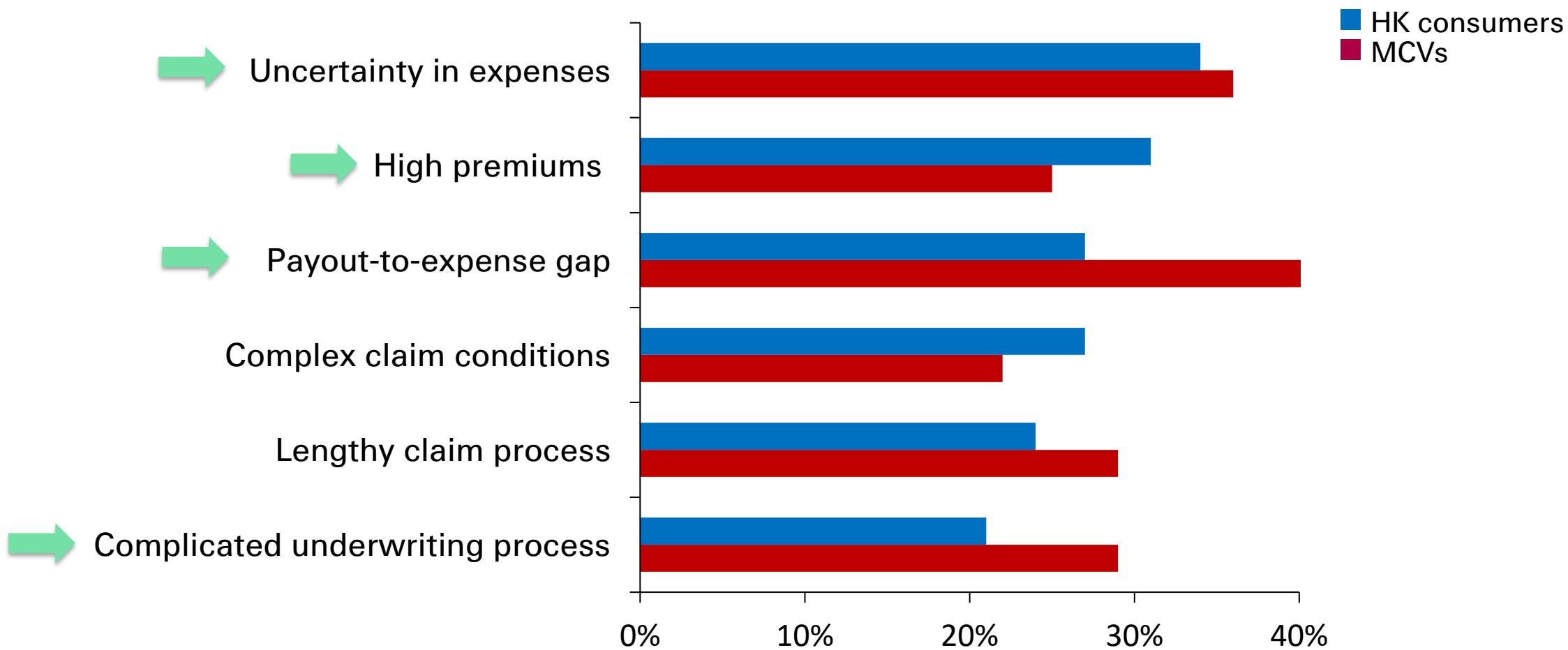


### Products intended to own in the next 12 months



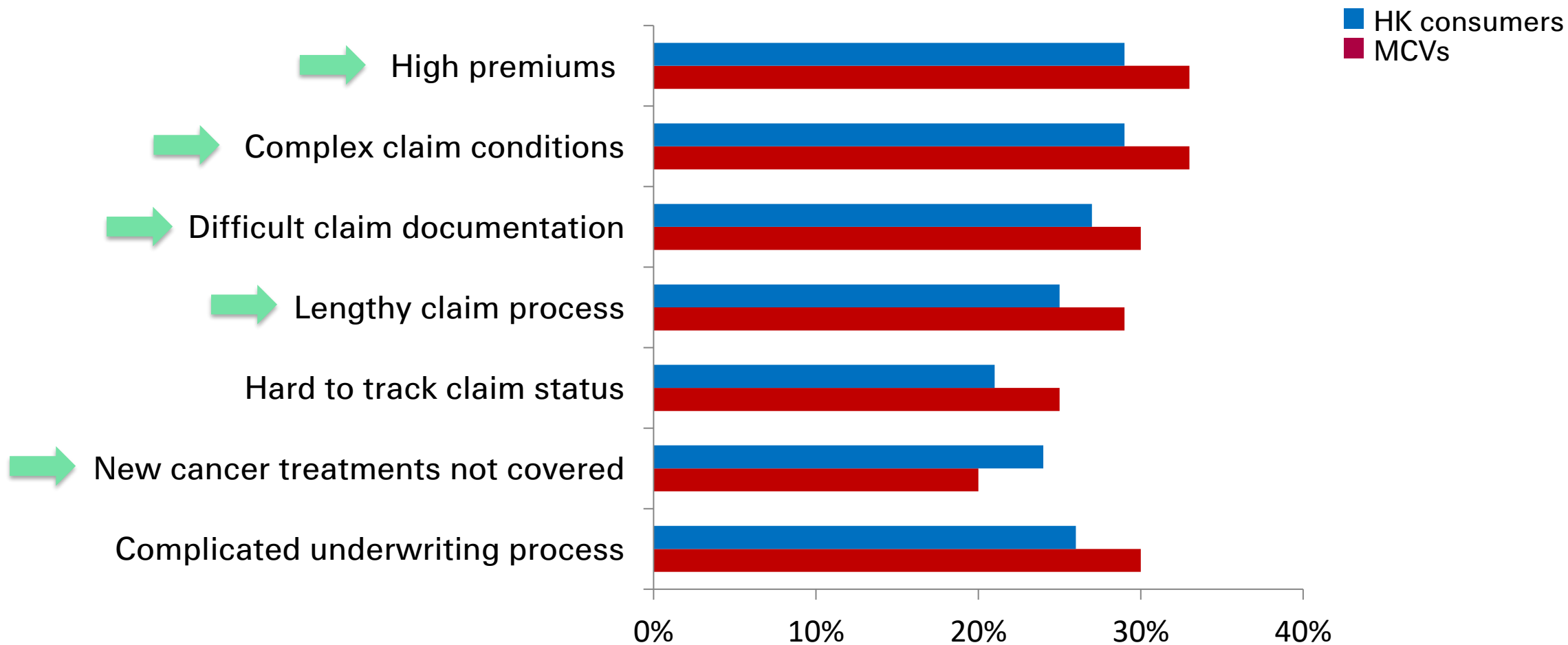
# Key pain points on current CI policies

## Cost uncertainty and insufficient payout emerge as the most critical pain points



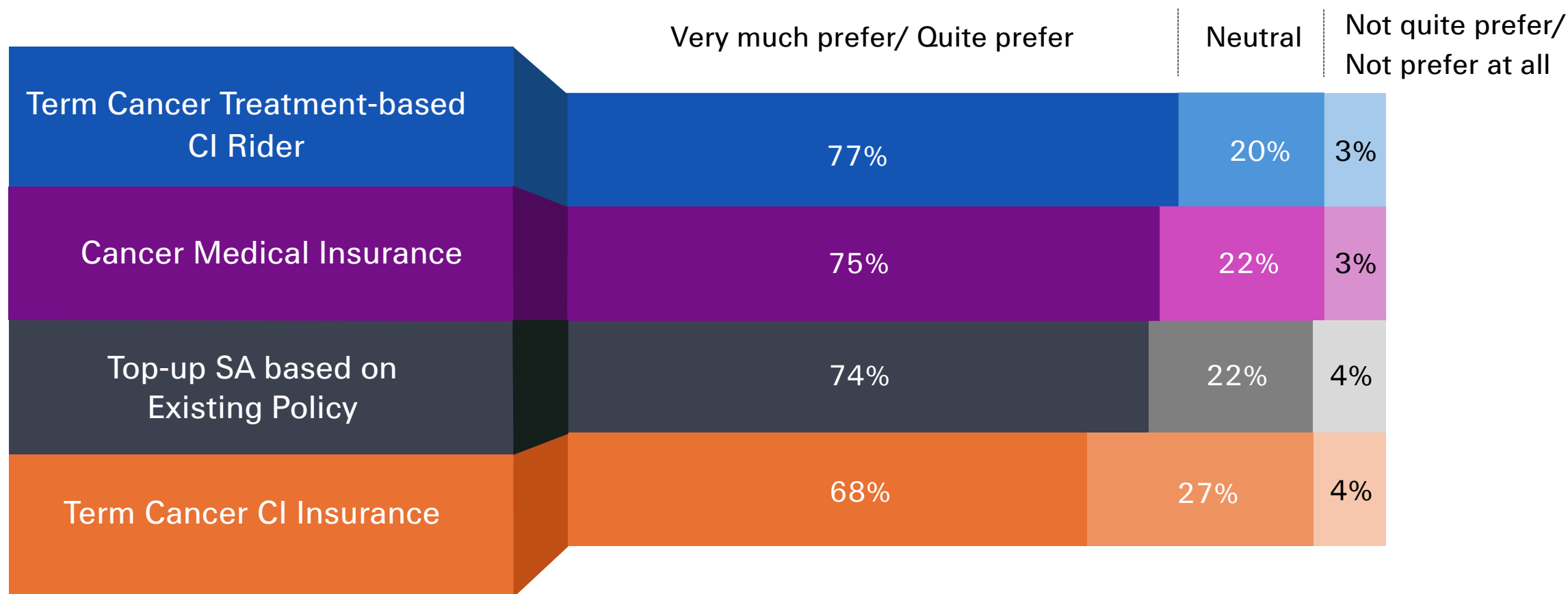
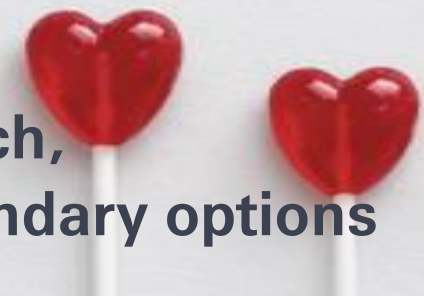
# Key pain points on current Medical policies

Beyond **high premiums** and **complex claims**,  
**gaps in new cancer treatment coverage** are highlighted by HK consumers



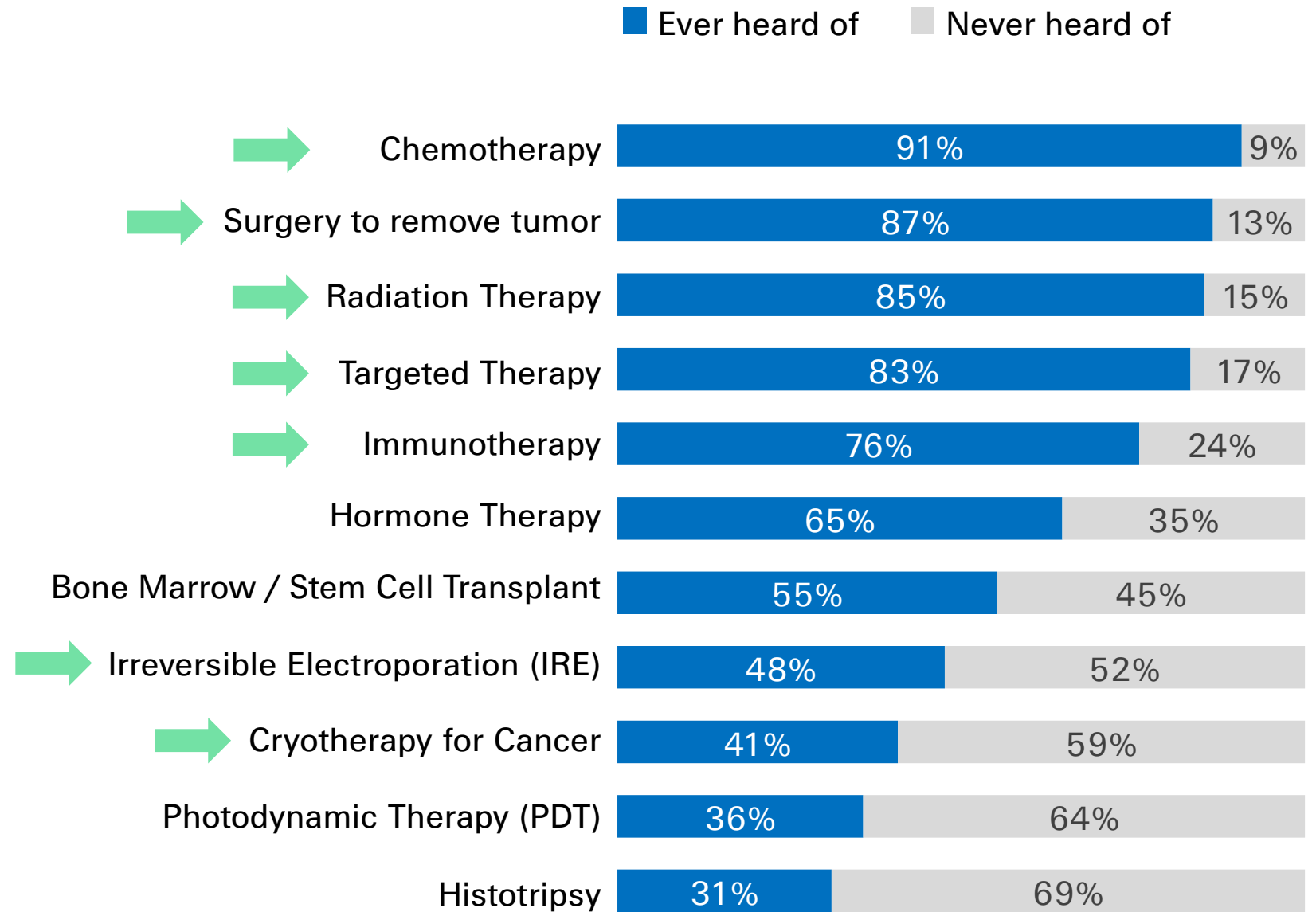
# Enhancing cancer protection preferences

Consumers prioritize **treatment-based CI** plans as the primary approach, followed by cancer medical and policy top-ups as closely ranked secondary options



Consumers show strong awareness of well-established cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation and targeted therapy.

A meaningful share are also familiar with non-conventional treatments like irreversible electroporation (IRE) and cryotherapy, indicating broader visibility beyond traditional options.



## Preference for cancer treatment

Willingness to pay for better outcomes is high. With Hong Kong as the preferred treatment destination, ranking ahead of China among both HK consumers and MCVs.

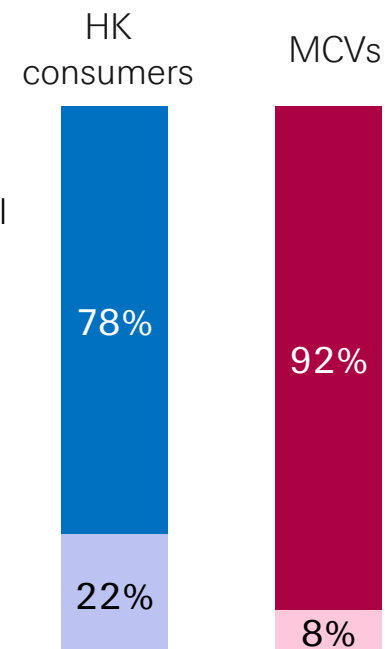
### Action if treatment cost outruns insurance payout amount



I will pay out of pocket for more non-conventional treatment with a higher chance of recovery

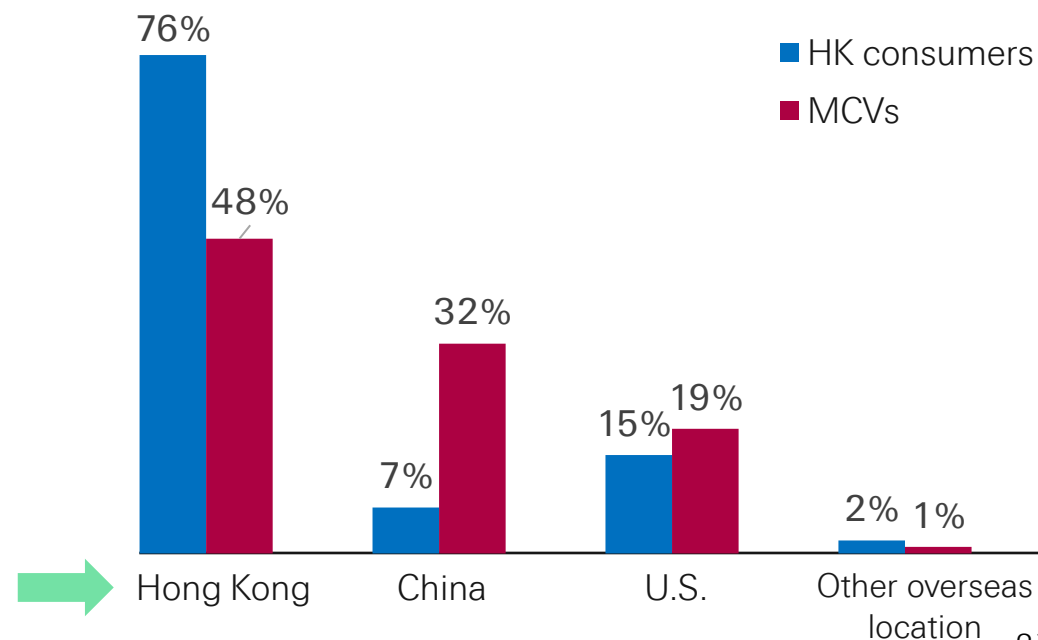


I will try to spend less on the treatment, even if it means I don't have the best chance of recovery

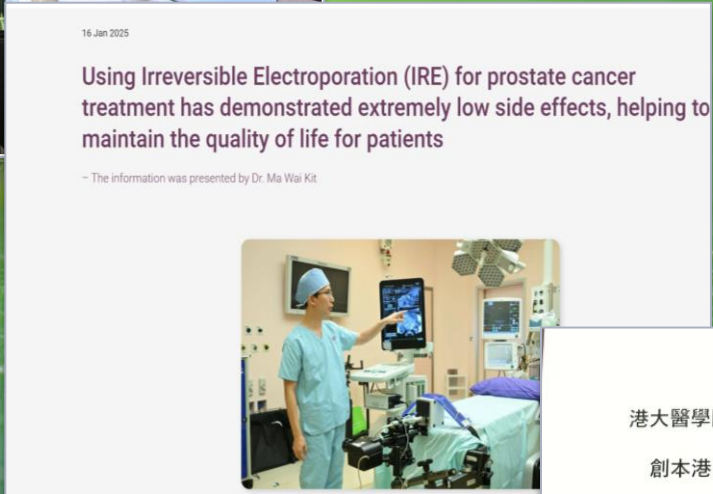



### Top preferred location for cancer treatment

Among those who will pay out of pocket



# Market news: Rise of non-conventional treatment in Hong Kong



A photograph of a woman and a young child lying on their backs on a lush green lawn. Both are wearing light green, long-sleeved sweaters and have their hands behind their heads, smiling warmly at the camera. The woman is on the right, and the child is on the left. The background is a dense field of green grass.

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